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TERRIFYING! STARTLING! SUSPENSE!

JULY 1952

NO. 6



10¢

ANC

# STRANGE MYSTERIES

**DEAD MAN'S**  
*Curse*

**MARAUDING**  
**MONSTERS**

**HEAD of**  
*Horror*

Also... **DOOMED**  
*to Live*





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# IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM



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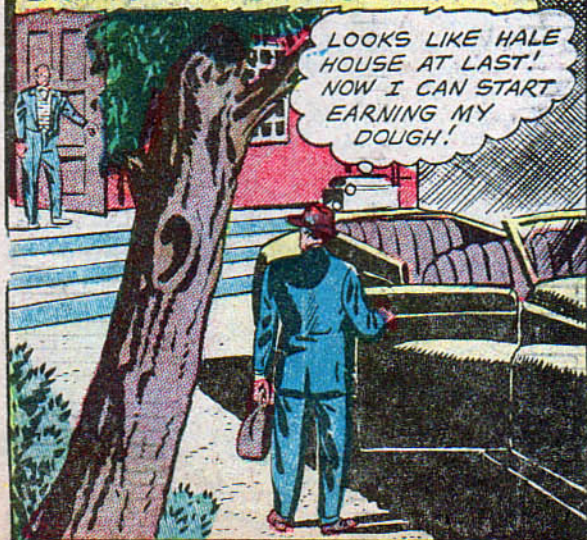


# Head of Horror

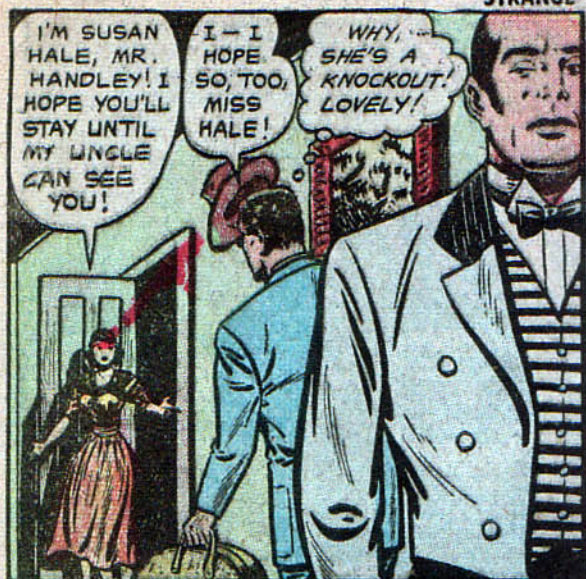
IT STARTED WITH BLOODY MURDER IN THE JUNGLES OF MALAYA — IT ENDED IN A TERROR FILLED OLD HOUSE IN DORSET! NEVER WAS THERE REVENGE AS HORRIBLE AS THIS TALE REVEALS...



DENNIS HANDLEY, EX-G.I., ARRIVES IN ENGLAND ON A STRANGE MISSION...







I'M SUSAN HALE, MR. HANDLEY! I HOPE YOU'LL STAY UNTIL MY UNCLE CAN SEE YOU!

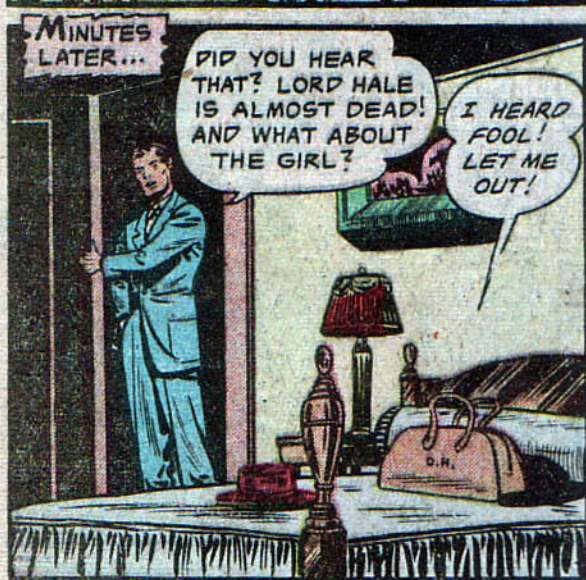
I—I HOPE SO, TOO, MISS HALE!

WHY, SHE'S A KNOCKOUT! LOVELY!



I'M VERY CURIOUS, MR. HANDLEY! YOUR TELEGRAM SAID YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT MY UNCLE WHO WAS KILLED IN MALAYA!

I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT! I MUST TALK TO LORD HALE ONLY!



MINUTES LATER...

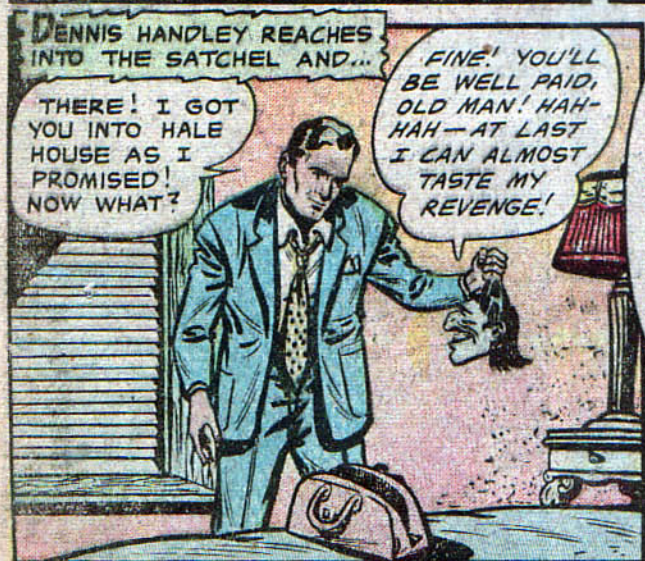
DID YOU HEAR THAT? LORD HALE IS ALMOST DEAD! AND WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL?

I HEARD FOOL! LET ME OUT!



HURRY! MY BROTHER MUSTN'T DIE — NOT UNTIL I HAVE MY REVENGE!

UGH — THE THINGS A GUY WILL DO FOR MONEY!



DENNIS HANDLEY REACHES INTO THE SATCHEL AND...

THERE! I GOT YOU INTO HALE HOUSE AS I PROMISED! NOW WHAT?

FINE! YOU'LL BE WELL PAID, OLD MAN! HAH-HAH — AT LAST I CAN ALMOST TASTE MY REVENGE!



LORD HALE, EH? MY DEAR YOUNG BROTHER — WHO LEFT ME FOR DEAD WITH THE MALAYAN HEAD HUNTERS! SO HE COULD INHERIT! WHAT A SURPRISE HE'S IN FOR...



THAT NIGHT AS DARK FOG CLOSES OVER THE DORSET HILLS...

HURRY! THEY MUST BE ASLEEP BY NOW! TAKE ME TO MY DEAR, SICK BROTHER!

OKAY! THE COAST SEEM TO BE CLEAR!

I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO SEE THE LOOK ON HIS FACE!

AND I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO GET THIS OVER WITH! GETTING ON MY NERVES! BUT FIFTY THOUSAND IS A LOT OF DOUGH!

STEALTHILY... INTO THE ROOM OF THE AILING LORD HALE...

BROTHER! DEAR BROTHER! ARE YOU AWAKE?

WHAT? MUST BE DREAMING! THOUGHT I HEARD...

SUDDENLY THE HEAD LEAPS FROM THE GRASP OF THE YOUNG AMERICAN...

N-NO! IT CAN'T BE! FITZHUGH! YOU'RE D-DEAD!

AM I? LOOK, DEAR BROTHER! THE SAME HEAD YOU SOLD TWENTY YEARS AGO!

HAH—  
HAH—  
HAH—

ADMIT IT, BROTHER! ADMIT YOU SOLD ME TO THE HEAD HUNTERS SO YOU COULD INHERIT! ADMIT IT BEFORE YOU DIE!

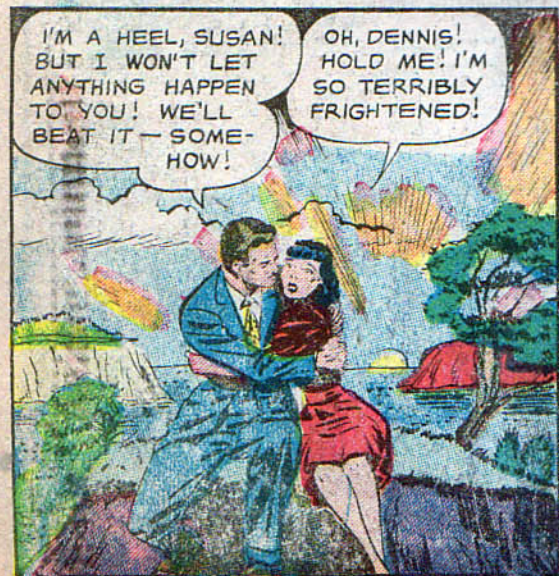
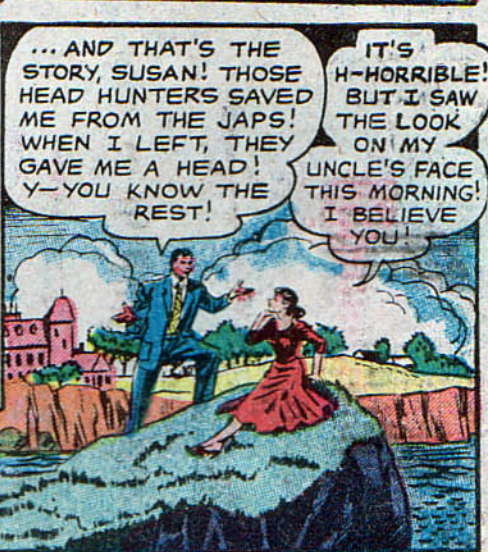
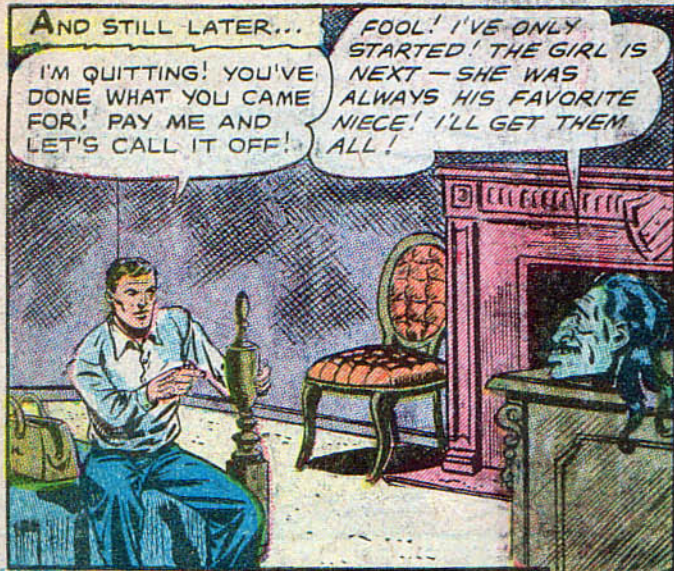
Y-YES! I DID! I DID! ANH—HELP! GAAAAAA...

A MOMENT LATER...

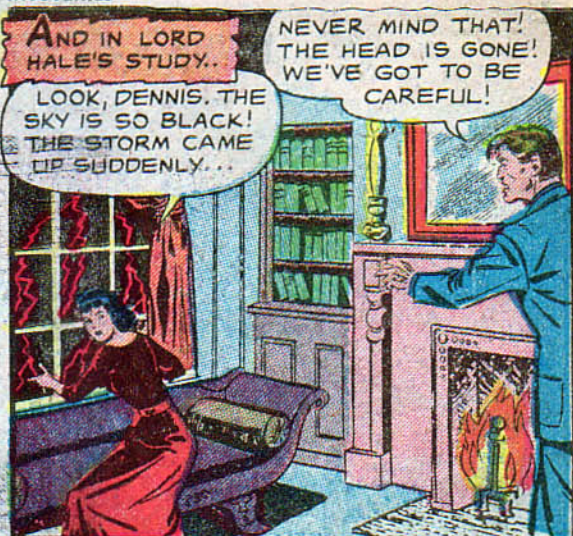
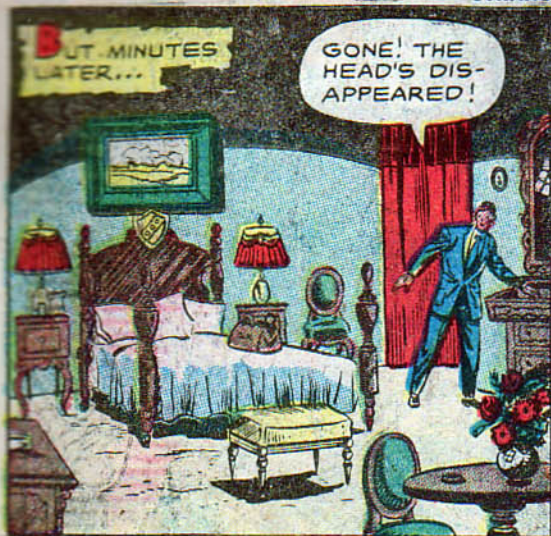
HE'S DEAD! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

AH, THAT WAS GOOD! WE'LL GO, BUT MY REVENGE IS ONLY STARTING!

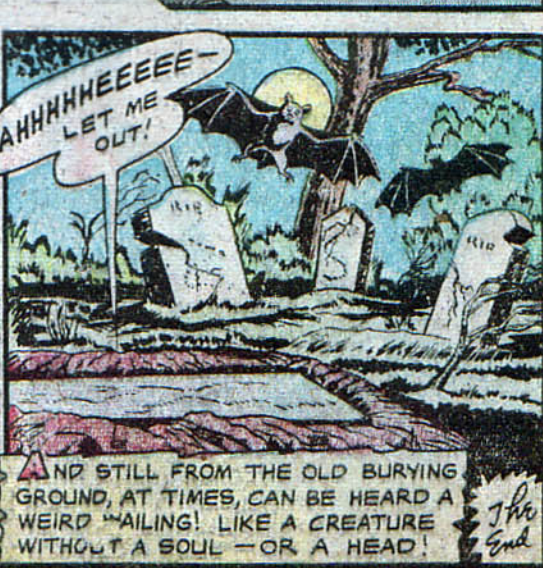
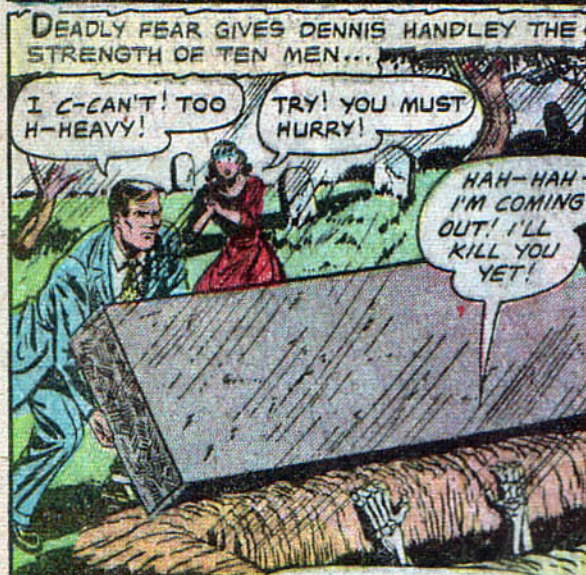












The End



# Marauding Monsters!

IS THE MYSTERY OF LIFE IN THE SECRET OF DEATH? — TO FIND SUCH AN ANSWER ONE MUST BE PREPARED TO FACE THINGS ONLY SEEN IN NIGHTMARES!



SCIENTIST FRANCIS CLAYTON HAD ALMOST BECOME A RECLUSE... IN HIS HILLTOP LABORATORY HE DEDICATED ALL OF HIS TIME AND SKILL TO THE ACHIEVEMENT ALL MEN SEEK... RESTORATION OF LIFE... PATIENTLY HE REPEATED, CORRECTED AND STUDIED HIS OWN EXPERIMENTS... BUT HIS EFFORTS CONSTANTLY ENDED IN FAILURE...

WRONG AGAIN... YET THERE MUST BE A WAY... THERE MUST...

OKAY, DOC, JUST STAND WHERE YOU ARE AND KEEP NICE AND QUIET! WE'VE GOT A LITTLE WORK FOR YOU...

H-HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE? WHO ARE YOU?





ONLY A FOOL GIVES ARGUMENT TO A GUN... CLAYTON STOOD MOTIONLESS, STARING INTO THE FACE OF CERTAIN DEATH WHILE FRANTIC THOUGHTS RACED THROUGH HIS STUNNED MIND...

W-WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?

ACTION! GET READY TO DO A HIGH-CLASS JOB, PAL... AND A LOT DEPENDS ON IT!

BUT I'M A SCIENTIST, NOT A SURGEON...

YOU KNOW HOW TO BRING BACK THE DEAD, DON'T YOU? THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR US...



NOW YOU'RE SMART... GET YOUR TOOLS TOGETHER, PAL...

IF I DON'T, THEY'LL KILL ME, AND I'LL NEVER SEE THE FINISH OF MY EXPERIMENT!

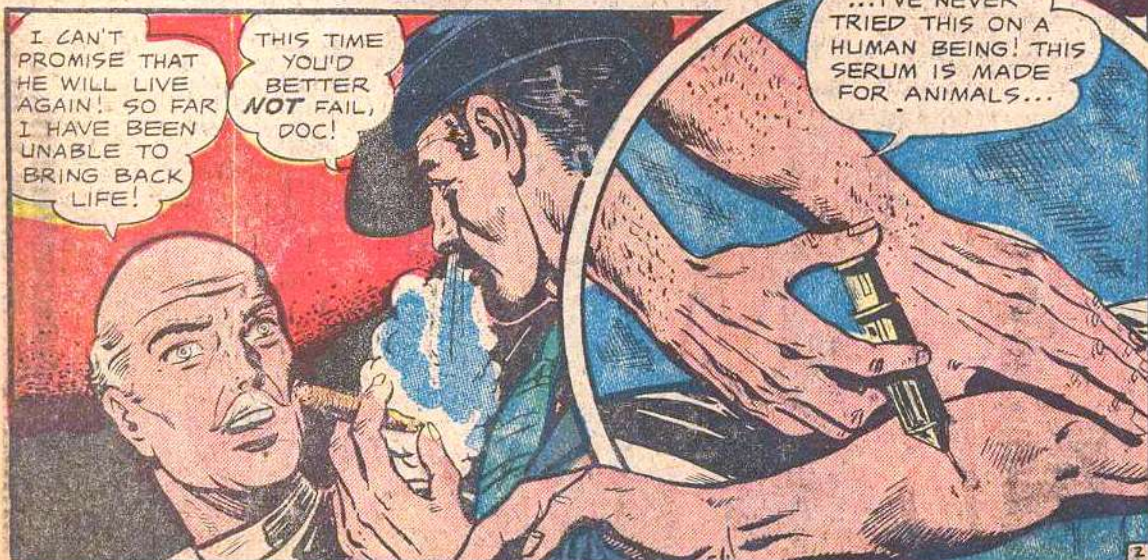
HE'S OUR LEADER, AND THAT BULLET IN HIS HEART SILENCED A BIT OF INFORMATION THAT THE BOYS WANTED TO KNOW!



I CAN'T PROMISE THAT HE WILL LIVE AGAIN! SO FAR I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO BRING BACK LIFE!

THIS TIME YOU'D BETTER NOT FAIL, DOC!

...I'VE NEVER TRIED THIS ON A HUMAN BEING! THIS SERUM IS MADE FOR ANIMALS...





CLAYTON WAS FIGHTING FOR LIFE AS HE NEVER DID BEFORE... TO LOSE THIS TIME MEANT TO DIE... AND SUDDENLY A FANTASTIC THING HAPPENED...

HE MOVED!  
I SAW HIM!

P-PLEASE,  
GENTLEMEN...  
YOU MUST BE  
QUIET!

IT AIN'T RIGHT,  
BRINGIN' CHARLIE  
BACK FROM THE  
DEAD!

YEAH... BUT HOW  
ELSE COULD WE FIND  
OUT WHAT HE DID  
WITH THE LOOT WE  
ALL WORKED FOR?



YOU *DID*  
IT, DOC!  
YOU'RE  
ALL RIGHT...

LOOK! HE'S  
BREATHING!



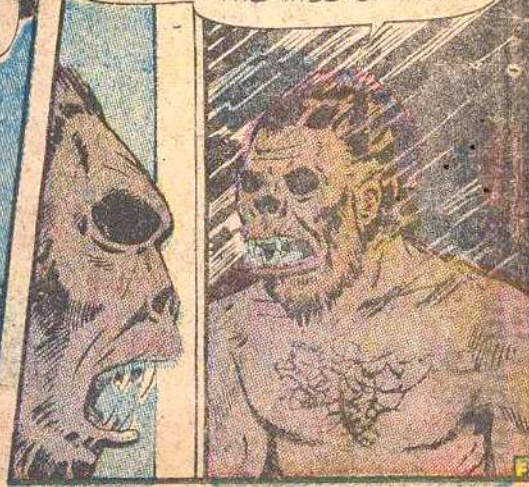
HE WON'T BE THE SAME...  
I WARN YOU... HE'LL BE...  
SEE FOR YOURSELVES...



CHARLIE!  
NO... I DON'T  
BELIEVE IT!

WHAT HAPPENED, BOYS? I  
THOUGHT I WAS A GONER,  
BUT I SEE... HEY, WHAT ARE  
YOU GOONS  
STARING AT?

WHAT IS THIS? SOME KIND OF  
JOKE? ANSWER ME, SOMEONE...  
ANSWER OR I'LL FINISH OFF  
THE MOB OF YOU!





SNARLING WITH RAGE, THE BEAST-MAN CLUTCHED THE ASTOUNDED SCIENTIST...

NO ONE PLAYS PRACTICAL JOSES ON CHARLIE, UNDER-  
STAND?

D-DON'T... IF YOU KILL ME, WHO CAN HELP YOU?

SO THAT'S IT, EH?



HE'S RIGHT, CHARLIE! IF WE BUMP HIM OFF, YOU'RE SUNK!

THEN SET UP SHOP, PAL! MAKE ME THE WAY I SHOULD BE, AND DO IT FAST!

I-I'll TRY...

TWO OF YOU KEEP HIM UNDER GUARD WHILE HE'S WORKING! THE REST OF US HAVE A FEW PERSONAL PLANS TO WORK OUT!



GET GOING, PAL! TRY OUT A FEW THINGS WITH THE BIG MONKEY OVER THERE..

WHAT CAN I DO? I CAN'T BRING THAT APE BACK TO LIFE! BUT I'LL PRETEND...

ALL RIGHT, YOU BOYS. NOW LET'S TALK OVER A FEW PLANS...

PLANS! WITH YOU LOOKING LIKE THIS, CHARLIE?





# STRANGE MYSTERIES

IN GROWLING, INHUMAN WHISPERS THE LEADER OF THE THUGS HELD COURT WITH HIS LAWLESS PARTNERS... AND ALL THE WHILE CLAYTON WORKED AND PLOTTED OVER THE INERT FORM OF THE HUGE, DEAD APE...



DON'T LET THE QUIET BOTHER YOU, DOC! CHARLIE TOOK THE BOYS OUT TO FINISH UP A LITTLE JOB WE STARTED BEFORE HE GOT SHOT...

I SEE...



HE SHOULDN'T BE PERMITTED OUT OF MY SIGHT... I MUST STUDY HIM...

GO STUDY YOUR OTHER APE, CHUM... AND KEEP OUT OF OUR BUSINESS...



W-WHAT'S HAPPENED?

GOT ANOTHER PATCH-UP JOB FOR YOU, DOC...



FIX HIM UP! AND SEE IF YOU CAN FIND OUT THROUGH HIM ANYTHING THAT CAN HELP ME!

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THIS! I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW I BROUGHT YOU BACK!



STOP TALKING AND START WORKING, PAL - BEFORE HE GETS TOO COLD!

APE-SERUM SHOT INTO HUMAN VEINS... THIS IS MADNESS...

TIME PASSED AND A WEIRD EVENT REPEATED ITSELF...

WHA... HE'S JUST LIKE I AM!

LIKE YOU! I'D RATHER BE DEAD!





BEAST-MAN SNARLED AT BEAST-MAN AND THE ROOM WAS SUDDENLY FILLED, WITH NAMELESS SUSPENSE... THERE COULD ONLY BE ONE LEADER IN AN APE PACK...

YOU STILL TAKE ORDERS FROM ME, UNDERSTAND?

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, CHARLIE...

YOU DON'T SCARE ME ANYMORE, CHUM! I'M TAKING OVER THE LEAD IN THIS TEAM AS OF NOW!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

YOU DIED ONCE, AND I'M GOING TO FIX IT SO YOU CROAK AGAIN...

\$-STOP 'EM! IT'S AWFUL!

NOT ME... I WOULDN'T DARE GO NEAR THEM!

ONE OF THEM HAS TO GIVE IN...

HORRIBLE... BUT IT'S GIVEN ME AN IDEA! A TERRIBLE IDEA...

HE'S DEAD! NOW YOU BOYS KNOW WHO'S THE LEADER AROUND HERE, DON'T YOU?





DESPERATION GIVES BIRTH TO INCREDIBLE THOUGHTS AND STRANGE DEEDS... CLAYTON SUMMONED ALL OF HIS COURAGE FOR SUCH AS HIS GUARD DOZED OFF TO SLEEP...

NOW... NOW'S MY ONLY CHANCE... IF ONLY IT WILL WORK ON A LIVING MAN!



ONE APE LEADER WILL NOT TOLERATE ANOTHER... THEN I'LL CREATE ANOTHER!



AGAIN THE UNEXPLAINABLE HAPPENED AND THE FEARFUL TRANSFORMATION TOOK PLACE...

JUST IN TIME... I HEAR FOOTSTEPS!



W-WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE? WHO ARE YOU?

YOU SHOULD KNOW... I'M THE BOSS!



THIS APE BUSINESS IS GETTING CONTAGIOUS!

YOU'LL HAVE TO PROVE THAT STATEMENT, PAL!

I'M READY...



WHILE THEY FIGHT, I'LL REFILL THE INSTRUMENT...

YOU ASKED FOR IT, GOON!

THIS IS GOING TOO FAR FOR OUR HEALTH!



FRIGHTENED MEN PITTED AGAINST EACH OTHER MADE EASY CLAYTON AS CIRCULATED THROUGH THEIR MIDST, SLUTCHING THE SOLUTION THAT WAS TO TRANSFORM THE LABORATORY INTO A CIRCUS OF HORROR...

I'M NOT GOING TO BE LED BY AN APE! I'M QUITTING THE MOB RIGHT NOW!

NO ONE QUILTS! WE'VE ALL GOT TOO MUCH ON EACH OTHER!

LUCK IS STILL WITH ME... THE SERUM HASN'T FAILED!

APES! WE'RE ALL TURNING INTO APES!



NOW YOU BRUTES TEAR YOURSELVES APART!

NOW WHO IS THE LEADER? ONE OF US MUST HEAD THE GANG, OR...

OR WHAT?

I'M THE BRAINS OF THIS OUTFIT!

NO! I AM...

I'LL SHOW ALL OF YOU!



I COULD ESCAPE NOW, BUT TO DO SO I'D HAVE TO ABANDON MY LABORATORY AND ALL THE WORK OF THESE PAST MONTHS! NO... I CAN'T... I MUSTN'T...

HORRIBLE... BUT ONCE THEY'VE DONE EACH OTHER IN, I CAN GET TO WORK ON MY REAL SPECIMEN AND SEE IF THE SERUM WILL WORK ON AN ANIMAL...

DIE! YOU BEAST!

YOU CALL ME A BEAST! YOU AN APE!





GUTTURAL SNORTING, GASPING AND INHUMAN MOANS OF THE INJURED AND DYING FILLED THE ROOM AS CLAYTON WATCHED IN FASCINATED HORROR...

SOON YOU'LL ALL BE GONE!

EVEN YOU, CLAYTON! NO NEED OF YOU ANYMORE! IT'S WORTH BEING AN APE-MAN! LOOK AT THE STRENGTH YOU GAVE ME!

NO... NO...

JUMPING CATFISH! LOOK AT THEM! ARE THEY ALL D-DEAD?

GET DOWN, CLAYTON... WE'RE USING AMMUNITION ON THOSE MONSTERS!

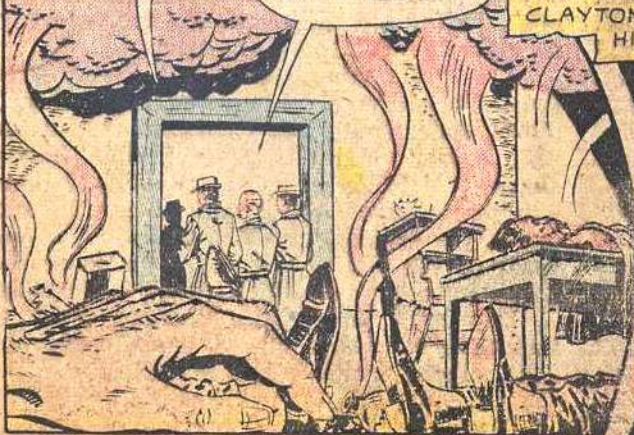
YOU'RE IN LUCK, MAN! WE TRACED THEIR TRACKS FROM A ROBBERY RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR!

STOP! STOP! GENTLEMEN! MY EXPERIMENT! MY LABORATORY! YOU'RE RUINING IT!

YOU'LL HAVE TO COME WITH US, MR. CLAYTON... HEADQUARTERS WILL WANT THE COMPLETE STORY ON THE CASE...

ALL MY WORK WASTED—MY BOTTLES OF SERUM SHATTERED... MY LIFE'S WORK RUINED...

**B**UT SOON AFTER, THE LABORATORY DOOR SWUNG CLOSED, LEAVING BEHIND CHAOS AND DEATH, A FIGURE STIRRED... BEAST EYES OPENED, A SHUDDER PASSED OVER THE BODY THAT HAD SO RECENTLY LEFT DEATH... BUT CLAYTON WAS NOT THERE TO SEE THAT HIS WORK HAD **NOT** BEEN IN VAIN!



The End



# THE BELOVED WITCH

Marvin Howard

I LOVED her from the first moment I saw her modeling in a Fifth Avenue store. I still love her. I suppose I'll always love her, even with all that has happened. Even when I awake some nights bathed in cold sweat, and realize that the screaming noise is coming from me.

How could I know? She was lovely. Long-legged, with bronze hair glinting about her heart-shaped face like a bright nimbus. She was soft and gentle and kind. A lady. A perfect lady that had, somehow, fallen in love with me. That was my Marcy. So I thought . . .

I'll skip the unessentials. I met her and married her. We took a nice apartment in the upper Sixties, an apartment with an adjoining office where I could carry on my work. My work! I'm a psychiatrist, you see. That's a laugh, all right! Me a psychiatrist and all the time my own wife — but I'm getting ahead of the story. It was like this . . .

It started, for me, that night when I woke up and found her missing. The bedside clock said after three. I was dazed with sleep, groggy and bone tired, and none of it made much sense at first. She was in the bathroom, or sneaking some cold chicken out of the icebox, something like that. I drowsed, waiting, but she didn't come back. Gradually the sense of something wrong came over me. Finally I knew what it was. It was the silence. No one could move around an apartment without making a little noise. Marcy was not in the apartment!

The clock said almost four by this time. I got up and went into the little kitchen. She wasn't there. She was nowhere. I tried the front door and it was still locked. That meant nothing, because she would have closed it after her. But where in the world could my wife be at four o'clock on a cold morning!

For some reason, I'll never know why, I unlocked the door and peered out. The corridor was empty. I walked to the fire-stairs at the rear, having some thought about Marcy having fallen, hurt herself, something like that. I'll admit I wasn't thinking too clearly. But I kept glancing

back, waiting for the whine of the self-service elevator. In our apartment the only stairs are the fire-stairs.

She wasn't on the stairs, of course. I went back to the apartment, getting scared now, and a little angry. It wasn't very considerate, I thought, for her to go for early morning walks without telling me.

"Hello, darling."

It was Marcy. She was standing in our bedroom, slipping into her nightgown. Her clothes made a filmy pile on the floor.

I stared at her. "Where in heck have you been?" I blurted.

She was snuggling into bed, looking like an angel. "I went for a walk," she yawned. "I couldn't sleep, darling. I wanted some fresh air. I just sneaked out without waking you. But I'm sleepy now. Goodnight, honey." And with that she turned over and went to sleep.

I was almost asleep myself before I thought of it. How had Marcy gotten back into the apartment? I was sure that the elevator hadn't come up while I was in the hall. It's old and creaky and I would have heard it sure. She hadn't come up the stairs. And outside our windows there was a six-floor drop to the street. I shook my head and forgot it! I was crazy! She *must* have come up in the elevator . . .

THREE DAYS later it happened again. Only this time I didn't get up. I stayed in bed and pretended I was asleep. I listened. And suddenly Marcy was in the room, making little rustling noises as she undressed, while the sweat turned cold on me. I had heard no sound. No door, no key, no elevator. Yet there she was.

I'm not a complete fool. I knew, even then, that I was up against something I didn't understand. But I couldn't dream the real horror of it. I thought that Marcy simply had fallen in love with another man, and had figured out a way to get in and out of the apartment without using the elevator or the stairs. Without even using the front door, though that seemed impossible.

It wasn't impossible. Because when it happened the third time I investigated the door, across which I had stretched a piece



if thread, and found it unbroken. Marcy was not using the door. That made less sense than ever to me. It meant one of two things — there was a secret way out of the apartment, or she could fly.

When I first noticed the story in the papers, I don't remember. It was in all of them. A series of strange murders were being committed over town. The victims, mostly men, were all of high reputation. All wealthy. And each one had been killed in the most improbable manner, behind locked doors. The police were frantic. Especially since there was one quasi-witness, a small boy, who swore that he had seen a black, shapeless thing fly from the window of one of the victims. The kid lived next door, and had been on his way back from the bathroom when he had looked out across an alley. He had, he swore, seen this "thing" fly from the window. Next day they had found a man dead in that apartment. The kid was lying, of course. But the cops couldn't shake his story. He said the black shape looked like a witch he had seen once in a story book. That caught on with the press. They called the murders the Witch Murders!

Then one day I faced it. I had to face it, because all of a sudden I remembered the incident of the Bible! My mother, long ago, had given me a little Bible. I had never lost it. When we first moved into our apartment I had placed the Bible on a table, but within an hour it was mysteriously missing. Marcy had been white-faced, sick and shaking, that day, but I had never connected the two. Now I did. I knew, somehow. The knowledge was terrible, but sure. I was married to a witch!

SINCE I didn't want to end up in a straitjacket, I had to handle it myself. And I was scared stiff. But it had to be done. I kept quiet, studied the right books, and one night I waited for her. I hid in the closet. The window was open and the moon was a big gold watch in the early spring sky. Through a crack in the door I watched the open window until I saw the black, amorphous shape clog it. There was a rustling of wind, and a sound like wings fluttering. I knew then that the kid hadn't been lying. My heart was a cold lump of gristle in me. I stepped from the closet.

"I know," I said softly. "I know about it, Marcy."

The black thing vanished. A faint smell of sulphur was in the room. Then my wife was smiling at me, as lovely as ever. Only her eyes were different. They were wild

things that crept around the room as though seeking a way out.

There was a difference in her voice, too, when she spoke. "So you know," she said. "I'm sorry, Jim. I love you. Really I love you. But I can't help being what I am."

"No," I said. "You can't. I don't understand it. I don't know how it could happen, or why, or why it should happen to me, to us, but I know what I have to do."

She smiled then. "And what is that, darling?" There was a soft menace in her voice now.

"Destroy you," I said. "What else?"

Marcy took a step toward me. "I'll kill you," she hissed. "I'm a witch, Jim! Why lie now. I married you because I needed the protection, the freedom, a married woman has. But I'll kill you if I have to. I—I won't go back down there!" She made a motion downward and I knew where she meant.

She took another step toward me. I reached into my coat and took out the Bible I had purchased that day. I held it out before me.

She screamed once. Then she took a step back and her eyes blazed with all the fires of Hell. *She* was afraid now!

Then suddenly she was gone. Before me was a giant cat. A dirty gray cat, spitting and clawing at me. Only the eyes were the same. The cat had Marcy's eyes.

I had the heavy cane ready. I reached for it, swung, and was about to kill when the cat let out a screech and sprang for the window. I don't remember too much of what happened after that. One thing I do know — the cat misjudged the distance. Something went wrong. And I remember the wail, the demon screech, as the cat went falling and twisting down to the street below. I'll never forget that sound!

When I reached the street a crowd had already formed. I elbowed through and saw what I expected — the bloody and crumpled form of my wife, Marcy. She was dead, in this life, but I imagined that I could hear her soul laughing and gibing at me from some nether region.

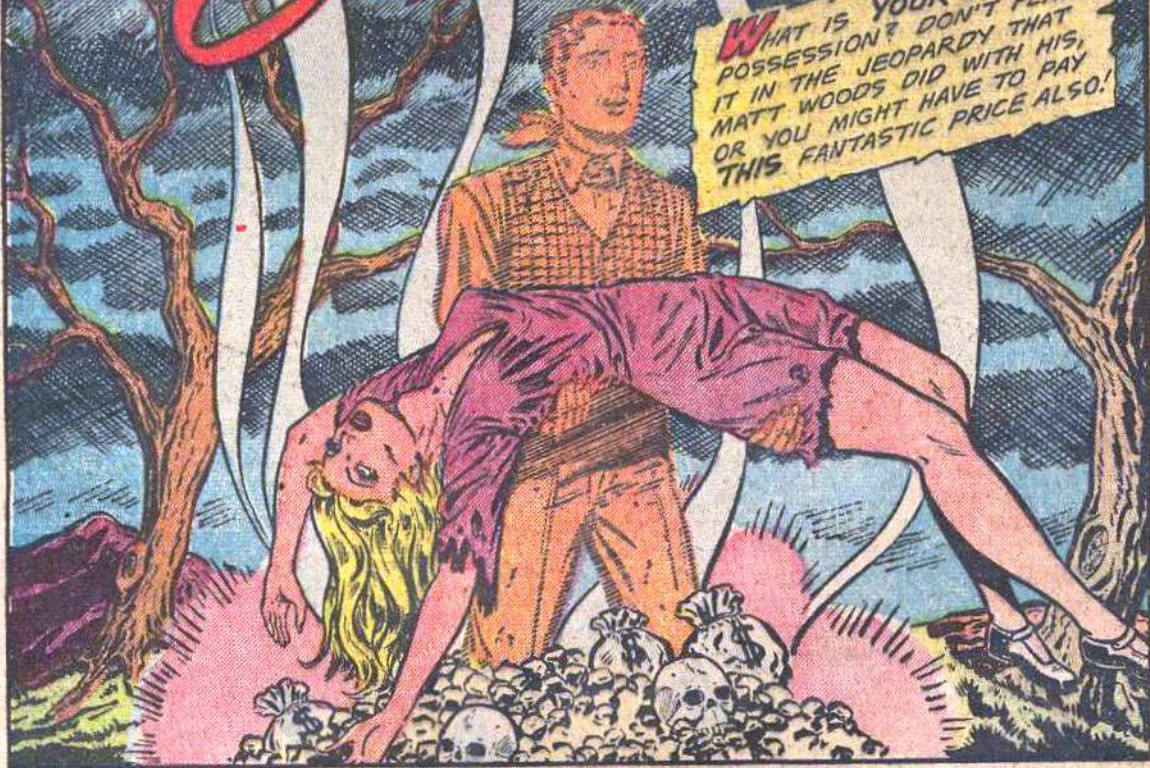
A big cop looked at me in odd fashion and I began telling him how Marcy had fallen. The look in his eyes told me I was in trouble.

I won't be waking up in a cold sweat much longer. Tomorrow they come for me. Then a man will throw a switch and the State will have done justice, they think. I pushed my wife out of a window, they said, and I must pay for it. The funny thing is that I don't care. I only hope that, wherever I go, I won't ever see my wife again.



# DEAD MAN'S CURSE!

WHAT IS YOUR DEAREST POSSESSION? DON'T PLACE IT IN THE JEOPARDY THAT MATT WOODS DID WITH HIS, OR YOU MIGHT HAVE TO PAY THIS FANTASTIC PRICE ALSO!



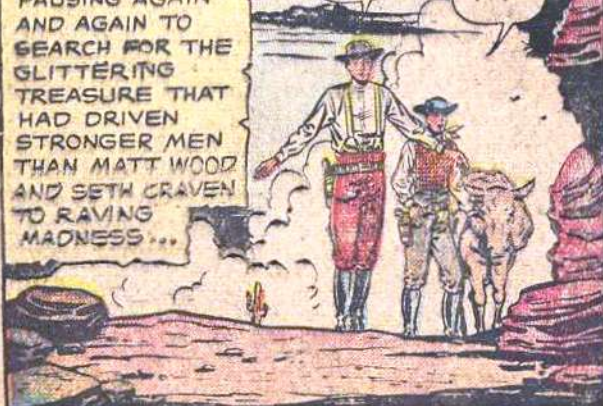
FOR MONTHS THE TWO FIGURES PRESSED ACROSS THE SEA OF BURNING SAND, PAUSING AGAIN AND AGAIN TO SEARCH FOR THE GLITTERING TREASURE THAT HAD DRIVEN STRONGER MEN THAN MATT WOODS AND SETH CRAVEN TO RAVING MADNESS...

CAN IT BE TRUE? MAYBE THE SUN'S GOT US?

NO... IT'S REAL, MATT! GOLD! AT LONG LAST WE'VE HIT IT!

... REMEMBER, SETH, WE'RE PARTNERS! WE SHARE FIFTY-FIFTY ON EVERYTHING — RIGHT?

OF COURSE, MATT. THAT WAS OUR AGREEMENT AND I DON'T BREAK PROMISES.





BUT SETH CRAVEN DIDN'T KNOW OF A PROMISE MATT HAD MADE TO HIMSELF... A DEADLY PROMISE...

I'VE SHARED THINGS WITH YOU TOO LONG, PARTNER... BUT AFTER TONIGHT THERE'LL ONLY BE ONE OF US...

DON'T MATT! I'M YOUR PARTNER! DON'T!



BE BACK, MATT! I'LL RETURN AND TAKE YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION FROM YOU... W-WAIT AND SEE, CURSE YOU!

THE DYING MAN'S WORDS TRAILED OFF... SOON THERE WASN'T EVEN A TRACE OF HIS PRESENCE... THE DEED WAS DONE, AND MATT WOODS TOOK ON A NEW PARTNER... GOLD... BAG UPON BAG OF GOLD... BUT WHAT OF THE CURSE?

AT LAST. A HOUSE OF MY OWN! NO MORE DESERT FOR ME... NOW I CAN LIVE! NEVER HAVE TO WORRY AGAIN FOR THE REST OF MY DAYS...



IT'LL BE SAFE DOWN HERE... AND NOW I'LL GO AND FETCH TRUDY... A MAN IN MY POSITION CAN AFFORD A WIFE...



...A RICH MAN ABOUT TO TAKE A YOUNG WIFE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE LOT OF A CURSED MAN... BUT THEN...



DROP THAT GOLD POUCH, STRANGER—OR DO I HELP MYSELF?

I—I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU... DON'T SHOOT!

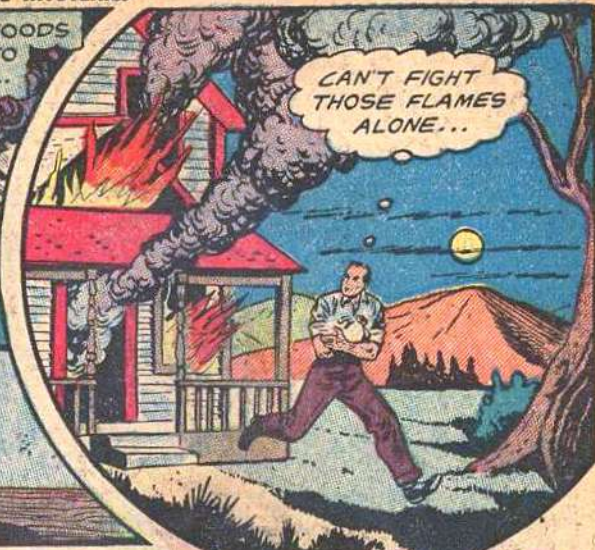


SHAKEN FROM HIS EXPERIENCE, MATT WOODS RETURNED TO HIS SHACK... HE NEEDED TO REPLACE THE GOLD HE WAS ROBBED OF... BUT AS HE WAS DOING SO...

SMOKE!  
BUT HOW—?



CAN'T FIGHT  
THOSE FLAMES  
ALONE...



IT'LL BURN TO THE GROUND!  
AND I WANTED TO BRING  
TRUDY HERE... WHAT LUCK...  
WHAT CURSED LUCK...



A CHILL  
PASSED  
THROUGH  
MATT'S MIND AS  
HIS OWN WORDS  
SETTLED INTO  
HIS THOUGHTS...  
THE ROBBERY...  
DID THE FIRE... DID  
THEY HAVE ANY  
CONNECTION  
WITH A DEAD  
MAN'S CURSE?  
TRUDY KNEW  
ALL THIS...  
YET SOON  
SHE, TOO, WAS  
TO WONDER...

YOU LOOK ILL  
LATELY, MATT. IS  
SOMETHING WRONG?  
COULD I HELP  
YOU SOMEHOW?

I HAD A FINE  
HOUSE TO BRING  
YOU TO, BUT  
NOW IT'S GONE...  
HOW CAN I ASK  
YOUR HAND  
NOW?



IF... IF IT WILL  
PLEASE YOU,  
MATT, I'LL  
MARRY YOU...

HE'S WORRIED  
HIMSELF ILL, POOR  
MAN. I COULDN'T  
TURN HIM DOWN  
NOW!

...THAT VERY NIGHT, MATT  
DID A STRANGE THING...

NOW, SETH CRAVEN, I'M RID OF  
THE GOLD AND I'M RID OF  
YOUR BLASTED CURSE!





TO BE SURE, MATT MADE A GREAT EFFORT TO REGAIN PEACE OF MIND... BUT THOUGHTS OF SETH'S CURSE CROWDED ALL ELSE OUT OF HIS CRAFTY MIND...



DEAD... OF COURSE HE'S DEAD... SO HE CAN'T COME BACK...

LOOK, MATT... NEW MATERIAL TO MAKE A DRESS. IT SAVES SO MUCH TO SEW...

MATT! WHAT'S WRONG? DON'T...

NO FINE POSSESSIONS! THIS IS THE KIND OF THING THAT BEGS FOR TROUBLE AND I WON'T STAND FOR IT!



ONE BY ONE MATT DISCARDED HIS POSSESSIONS IN SEARCH FOR POVERTY... OBEDIENTLY. TRUDY STAYED BY HIS SIDE, BUT HER HEART GREW COLD WITH FEARFUL APPREHENSION...

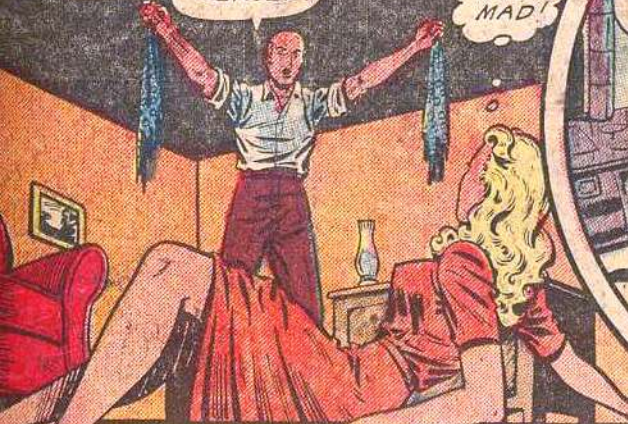
THIS IS JUST WHAT HE'D WANT! THIS WOULD GIVE HIM SOMETHING TO COME FOR! IT WAS THE THINGS GOLD CAN BUY THAT HE CURSED!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

HE'S MAD! MAD!

THERE'S ONLY THIS BREAD LEFT TO EAT, MATT...

IT'S ENOUGH. WE DON'T NEED MORE...



WHAT CAN I DO? HE WON'T LET ME OUT OF HIS SIGHT... AND EACH DAY HE ACTS WORSE... MOVING TO THIS SHACK, REFUSING TO BUY FOOD...

NO NEED TO PRETTY UP! YOU'RE NOT A QUEEN! YOU'RE A POOR WOMAN! YOU HAVE NOTHING — UNDERSTAND?

OH, MATT... PLEASE...





TRUDY PLANNED HER DAYS CAREFULLY... ATTEMPTING ONLY TO KEEP AWAY FROM HER STRANGE, CRUEL SPOUSE... AND ONE DAY...

I WONDER WHO THIS HANDSOME STRANGER IS WITH MATT? MAYBE IT WILL PLEASE HIM TO REMEMBER... I'LL ASK...

WHO IS THIS, MATT?

SETH! — WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?



PRYING AROUND, ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND, EH? CAN'T YOU LET WELL ENOUGH ALONE?

BUT IT'S ONLY AN OLD PICTURE, MATT!

HEARTSICK WITH HER LOT, TRUDY MADE NO FURTHER ATTEMPT TO OFFER FRIENDSHIP TO MATT... INSTEAD SHE SPENT HER TIME ENTIRELY ALONE..

OH... YOU'RE STILL UP, MATT!

WHERE WERE YOU? WHAT WERE YOU DOING OUT IN THE NIGHT?



WALKING IN THE WOODS. IT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT... I MET A STRANGER... HE LOOKED LIKE A PROSPECTOR... HIS CLOTHES WERE...

LIKE THIS? ANSWER ME! D—DID HE LOOK LIKE THIS MAN?

WHY, YES. YES, MATT, VERY MUCH!





CRAZED WITH FEAR, MATT RUSHED INTO HIDING WITHIN HIS OWN ROOM... FOR FULLY A DAY, TRUDY WAS RELIEVED OF HIS MAD RAVINGS, AND THE FOLLOWING NIGHT SHE SLIPPED OUT AGAIN...

TRUDY! WHERE ARE YOU?  
ANSWER ME, WOMAN!



SHE'S GONE! PROWLING ABOUT IN THE WOODS SEARCHING FOR SETH! PLOTTING WITH HIM AGAINST ME, IS SHE?



I'LL TEACH HER... IT'S A SCHEME TO FRIGHTEN ME! THE WOMAN I LOVE TURNING AGAINST ME! I'LL FOLLOW HER...



S-SETH! NO... IT CAN'T BE! SETH! WITH MY WIFE!

I'M SO LONELY... ALL DAY I WAITED FOR THIS HOUR, DARLING.

POOR LITTLE TRUDY...



I'LL DO ANYTHING TO MAKE YOU HAPPY, TRUDY... PERHAPS THERE'S STILL A WAY...

OH, IF ONLY IT COULD BE... BUT HOW COULD I EVER LEAVE MATT... HE'S SO ILL...



KEEP AWAY FROM MY WOMAN, SETH CRAVEN!

HELLO, PARTNER...

MATT!



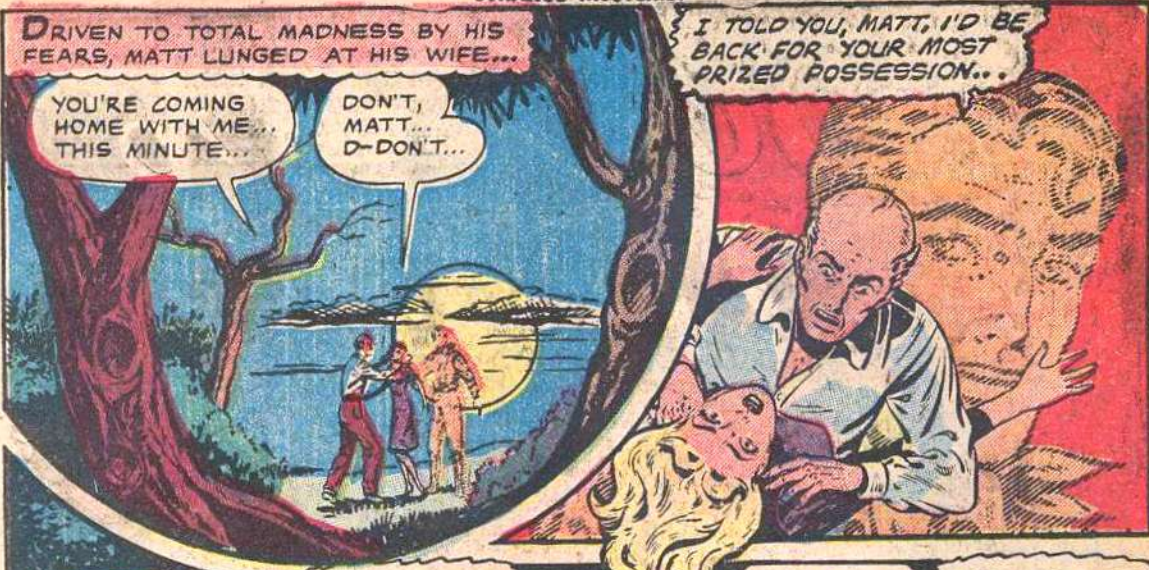


DRIVEN TO TOTAL MADNESS BY HIS FEARS, MATT LUNGED AT HIS WIFE...

I TOLD YOU, MATT, I'D BE BACK FOR YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESSION...

YOU'RE COMING HOME WITH ME... THIS MINUTE...

DON'T, MATT... D-DON'T...



S-SHE'S DEAD!

JUST AS I AM, MATT. YOU'RE TWICE A MURDERER NOW!

DON'T TAKE HER FROM ME! SHE'S ALL I HAVE... DON'T GO, TRUDY...

IT'S TOO LATE, MATT. I CAN'T RETURN NOW...

YOU OUT-WITTED YOURSELF AGAIN, PARTNER...



NO, NO! DON'T GO AWAY! YOU BELONG TO ME...

COME, TRUDY, I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT REAL HAPPINESS IS...

YES, MATT WAS SOON PLACED UNDER PROPER CARE. HE SPENT HIS DAYS AND NIGHTS RAVING AND SCREAMING HIS PLIGHT... BUT IT WAS TOO LATE THEN... MUCH TOO LATE...

I LOVED HER AND SHE RAN AWAY WITH ANOTHER...

LISTEN TO HIM! HE STRANGLED THE POOR GIRL AND STILL HE CLAIMS THAT SHE RAN AWAY WITH A GHOST!



The End



# DOOMED to LIVE!

EVIL BEGETS MORE EVIL UNTIL THERE IS NO ESCAPE FROM A VICIOUS CYCLE THAT SHOULD END IN DEATH, BUT DOESN'T... ALWAYS!



WE'LL GRANT, DEAR READER, THAT JOHN WELLS WAS NOT AN AVERAGE MAN... HIS PAST WAS BLACKENED WITH CRIME, HIS PRESENT STEEPED IN PERIL... BUT IT IS HIS FUTURE THAT HOLDS AN EVIL FASCINATION... LET US LOOK IN ON IT...

AT LAST. THEIR LASTED GUNS CAN'T REACH ME NOW...





WHEN WELLS RETURNED TO CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT, HIS TREMBLING FINGERS EXPLORED HIS FACE AND FEAR DRUMMED THROUGH HIS BRAIN, BUT THERE WAS NO TIME FOR SELF PITY...

IF I STOP NOW THEY'LL FIND ME FOR SURE... GOT TO MOVE ON...

HA! A PLACE TO EAT... AND WASH AWAY THE BLOOD SO I CAN SEE BETTER...



... GENTLY, WELLS UNTIED THE MAKESHIFT BANDAGE, AND THE MIRROR TOLD THE STORY... YES, INDEED, LIFE WAS TO BEGIN ANEW FOR JOHN WELLS...



EMPTY DAYS PASSED, AND THE HATE OF HIS OWN APPEARANCE SEEPED INTO HIS EVIL HEART... POISONING HIS MIND AGAINST EVERY LIVING THING...

GIT, YOU CUR! DON'T COME SLINKING UP TO ME FOR CHOW!



CUSS IT!). NO AMMUNITION! CAN'T SHOOT HIM...

HIS LIFE SPARED BY SHEER LUCK, THE TRUSTING DOG ATTACHED HIMSELF TO THE HATE-FILLED CRIMINAL... UNPETTED AND UNFED HE STAYED... ON HIS FAITHFUL EARS FELL THE WORDS OF JOHN WELLS...

TIRE OF BEING ALONE...



I'LL SPEAK TO THE FIRST PERSON I COME TO...

I'M YOUR NEIGHBOR...

EEK! GO... GET AWAY FROM HERE BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE!



BLAST HER... WON'T BE FRIENDLY, EH? WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

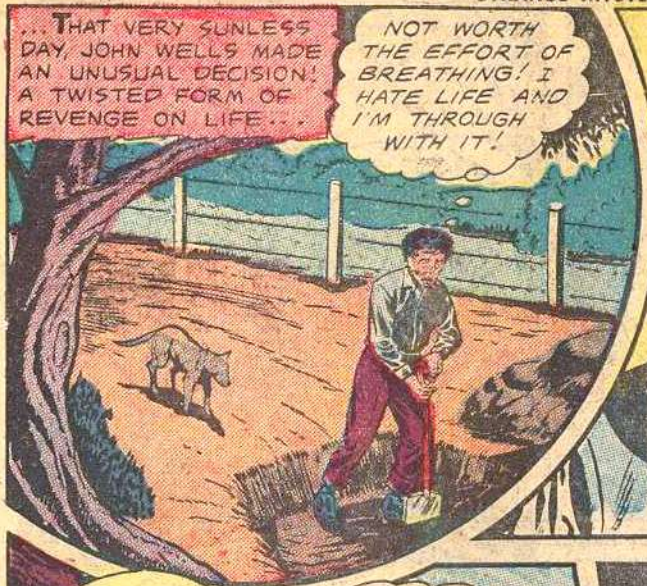




...THAT VERY SUNLESS DAY, JOHN WELLS MADE AN UNUSUAL DECISION! A TWISTED FORM OF REVENGE ON LIFE...

NOT WORTH THE EFFORT OF BREATHING! I HATE LIFE AND I'M THROUGH WITH IT!

IT'S MY LIFE TO DO AS I PLEASE WITH... AND I CHOOSE TO GET RID OF IT!



BUT DEATH WAS NOT TO BE HAD JUST FOR THE ASKING... THE MORNING PROVED THAT... AND WORSE!

WHA... THE POISON! IT DIDN'T KILL ME... BUT LOOK... LOOK AT ME NOW!

GOT TO SEE A DOCTOR... HE'LL HELP ME...



I NEED HELP... GET THIS COLOR OUT OF ME! DO YOU HEAR...

J-JOHN WELLS, THE ESCAPED KILLER!

ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME, OR AM I GOING TO FINISH YOU?

IT'S AGAINST MY OATH TO HELP A CRIMINAL, WELLS!





WELLS' TRIGGER-MIND SAW AN EVIL SOLUTION TO HIS BAD PLAN... IN BRIEF, HE FINISHED OFF THE HONORABLE MAN OF MEDICINE AND GLEEFULLY TURNED HIMSELF OVER TO THE LAW...

WE'LL FIX YOU AS SOON AS THE CORONER'S REPORT COMES THROUGH, LUGLY!

WHY WAIT? KILL ME NOW!

DEATH DUE TO NATURAL CAUSES... HEART ATTACK! GET GOING, YOU PHONY— AND KEEP AWAY FROM THIS PLACE!

NO... NO... KILL ME!

POLICE STATION 3.

DEATH, AS EVERYTHING ELSE, AVOIDED JOHN WELLS... EVERYTHING EXCEPT A STRANGE MAN WHO NEVER LEFT HIS SIDE...

SITTING BY MY GRAVE GETS ME NOTHING... EXCEPT COLD...

COLD! THAT'S IT... AND IT'LL GET COLDER TONIGHT! THAT WILL DO IT! AT LAST I'VE THOUGHT OF A WAY!

NOW I LAY ME DOWN AND FREEZE... "PERHAPS THAT'S WHAT SPUN AROUND WELLS' WARPED BRAIN WHEN HE STRETCHED OUT ON THE COLD EARTH BY HIS OWN GRAVE..."

COLDER... IT'S COLDER... I CAN HARDLY FEEL...

THE FAITHFUL CUR WATCHED HIS CRUEL FRIEND AS THE BITTER MAN TRAILED OFF INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, THEN QUIETLY, HE, TOO, SLIPPED INTO THE GRAVE AND CURLED HIMSELF OVER THE INERT FORM... AND AT DAWN...

YOU! YOU KEPT ME WARM! YOU SPOILED MY PLANS...



...TIME CEASED IN THIS BLACK WORLD OF BROODING... WELLS DID NOTHING BUT PLOT HOW TO STOP EXISTING...

...I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING... SOME WAY...

...EVEN A WARPED MIND NEEDS SOME NOURISHMENT... SOON WELLS SLUMPED TO THE FLOOR AND A NUMB STUPOR OVERTOOK HIM... HUNGER WAS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM... BUT...



HIS DOG KEPT A'BARKIN' AN' PULLIN' ME ALONG! THIS IS THE WAY I FOUND HIM, DOC, BEFORE I RAN TO GIT YOU...

JUST IN TIME, TOO! THIS MAN WOULD HAVE DIED IN ANOTHER HOUR!



FEEL BETTER NOW, FRIEND?

FRIEND! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME, CURSE YOU!

WHAT!



HE'S MAD! WE SAVE HIM AN' HE ATTACKS US!

RUN! THIS IS GRATITUDE FOR YOU! THE MAN'S A DEVIL!



YOU BROUGHT 'EM HERE, DIDN'T YOU? BLAST YOU!





THE EVIL WHEEL THAT  
DUGGED WELLS' BRAIN  
GAVE ANOTHER TURN,  
AND...

SO SIMPLE!  
WHY DIDN'T  
I THINK OF  
THIS BEFORE?

DEATH  
BY HIS OWN  
KNIFE WAS  
HIS NEXT  
PLAN...

... RIGHT HERE BY THE  
LAKE WHERE I CAN WATCH  
MY OWN REFLECTION...  
PERFECT!



GRRRR...

BUT  
THE DOG  
LEAPED AT  
JOHN WELLS!  
TRIST...

YOU MANGY CUR! THE  
WATER IS DEEP HERE...  
HOW CAN I FIND  
MY DAGGER?



YOU STOPPED ME  
AGAIN! YOU'RE THE  
CAUSE OF ALL MY  
TROUBLE!



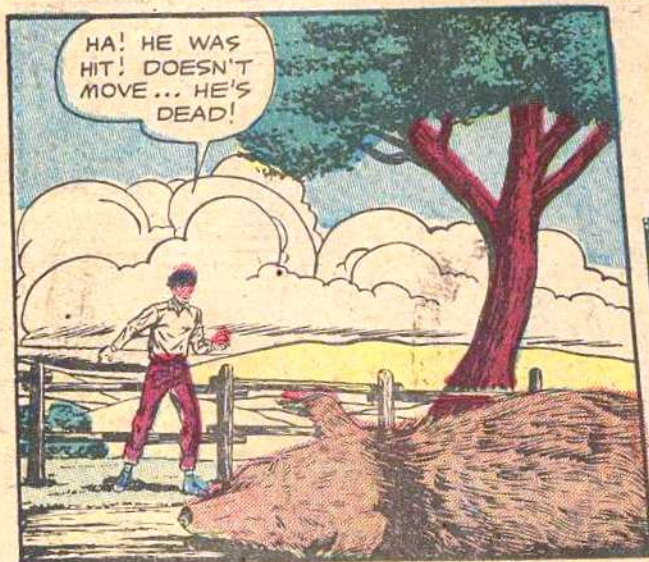
GO ON, GET!  
KEEP GOING OR  
I'LL STONE THE  
LIFE OUT OF YOU!



... HE'S GONE... AND THE  
LAKE IS JUST WHAT WILL  
DO IT... NICE AND DEEP...







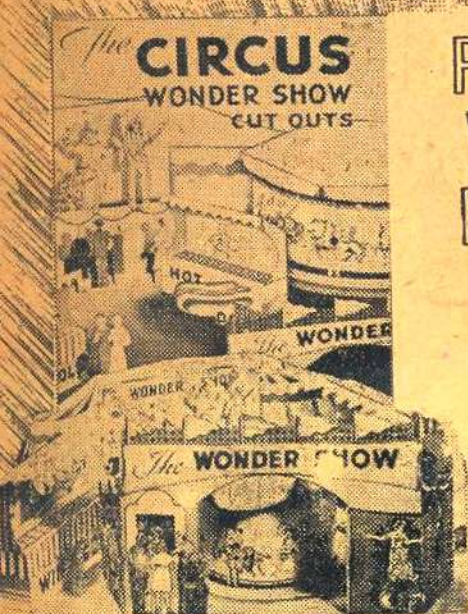
...JOHN WELLS WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN WHAT TO CALL THE EMOTION THAT PASSED FLEETLY THROUGH HIS BLACK-HEARTED THOUGHTS... BUT IT DID HAVE A NAME... PITY! FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS CRIME-STREAKED LIFE, THIS EVIL MAN KNEW A DECENT REACTION...



...HOW RIGHT HE WAS, DEAR READERS... AS JOHN WELLS APPROACHED THE GRAVE HE DUG FOR HIMSELF, HE STUMBLED... THE FAITHFUL DOG, NOW STIFFENED IN DEATH, FELL FROM HIS ARMS AND WELLS SPRAWLED ON THE GROUND... MOTIONLESS FOREVER...

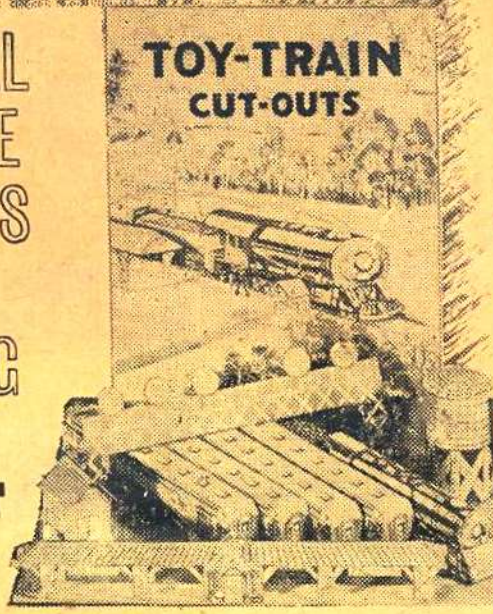






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HEARTS  
ARE  
YOUNG

at the  
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EVER!**



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